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**BY REV. G. OWEN.**  
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PREFACE.

Among the many books published in this book-making age, I am not aware that any has been prepared for the special benefit of the class referred to in this little volume.

No one can deny that servants exert an important influence over each other, and even over our children while in the nursery, and during childhood, and that they contribute much to our domestic peace and happiness. This being true, should not every means possible be used to promote among them, virtue, intelligence, and the fear of God?

Hoping that this little volume will aid in bringing about this happy result, I have ventured to send it forth, written in a style plain, simple, and unadorned.

That it may be instrumental under God in leading many of those here addressed, to walk in the paths of usefulness here, and of happiness hereafter, is the fervent prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

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INTRODUCTION.

**"ORDER IS HEAVEN'S FIRST LAW, AND THIS CONFEST,
SOME ARE, AND MUST BE GREATER THAN THE REST."**

SOCIETY is necessarily constituted of different orders. Some are rich, and some poor. Some rulers, and some subjects. Some masters, and some servants.

These relative terms arise out of the very constitution of things, and cannot be changed on any condition without producing confusion, and anarchy. And indeed if it were possible to alter the present state of society, if the levelling system could succeed to-morrow, and place all on equal footing, yet in a very short time there would be as much inequality and disproportion as ever, inasmuch as some by neglecting their duty, would become poor and dependant, while others, by attending to their business would become rich and powerful.

Hence the folly and absurdity of those who contend for perfect equality in all things, and declaim against the different orders of society, as improper, and all human institutions as unlawful. Observe the intimate connexion and beautiful harmony that exist in a well-organized community, when each one is found in his proper place, and all act and feel as brethren, when peace, and love, and good order reign, and none molest, nor make afraid.

Men are united in society like the organs and members in the human body, and no one in either case can be put out of its place without producing uneasiness and disorder in the rest. For it is a fact no less interesting than true, that we are dependent beings not only on our Creator, but also on each other, and no one can live comfortable and happy for a single day, without receiving some aid from his fellow creatures.

As in the human body each part has its appropriate functions to perform, and all are fixed in their proper places, so in society, each member has his peculiar duties to discharge, and all are placed in those very stations for which they are fitted.

Suppose for instance, that the different members of the human frame possessed consciousness, and that disagreement prevailed among them, those less honourable should covet the places of those that are more prominent; the foot dissatisfied with its lowly,

and laborious, yet useful station, should covet the powers, and functions of the hand ; the ear should repine and refuse to perform its duties, because it was not placed in the office of the eye ; what would be the inevitable consequence ? would it not be the destruction of the whole body ? precisely so in society, when its different members disagree, when those that occupy more humble stations covet the places and offices of those that are more highly honoured ; and should this spirit become prevalent, it would tear asunder every bond of union, and overthrow the whole fabric of society.

A station for every one, and every one in his station is an adage worthy of all consideration, and he who acts well his part in life, whatever may be his occupation, will always command respect, and render himself happy. Many are apt to think that happiness consists entirely in outward circumstances, or that it is peculiar to certain stations. If they were rich, and had plenty of money, or if they occupied the place of such a person, and stood as high in society as he does, how happy they would feel. Now this is all delusion, and may be regarded as one of the greatest sources of unhappiness to our race.

For if every one was contented with his lot, half the miseries in our world would soon disappear—There is not perhaps a more pitiful object in existence, than a discontented person. He is ever rest-

less, and uneasy, dissatisfied with his station in life, his connexions, and almost every thing around him ; he is always peevish and fretful, impatient of every injury he receives, and unduly impressed with every disappointment he suffers. He thinks all other persons more happy than himself, and enjoys hardly any of the blessings of Providence with a grateful heart. He brings before his mind a thousand distressing objects, that have no existence except in his gloomy imagination, and renders his present condition unhappy, by anticipating the miseries he may endure many years hence. It is surprising how ingenious he is in making himself miserable, by aggravating to his own fancy beyond bounds, all the evils he endures. He compares himself with none but those whom he imagines to be more happy, and complains that upon him alone has fallen the whole weight of human sorrows. He mourns and weeps, and breaks his heart, and no one knows for what.

But he that is of a contented spirit has none of these direful forebodings. He does not torment his soul with imaginary evils, nor give way to unreasonable fears. He is not ruffled and disconcerted by every little cross event which may occur, nor murmur and complain, when adversity, and misfortune befall him ; he is accustomed to look on the bright rather than the dark side of the picture, and believes that when appearances are darkest, the dawn of a

more comfortable day is near. If he should receive injury, he endures it with patience, and when he meets with disappointment, he is not deeply mortified. He may not enjoy the blessings of Providence in so rich abundance as many others, yet he enjoys the little he has with a grateful heart. He is not in the habit of comparing himself with those that are above him in worldly comforts, but rather with those that are in inferior circumstances. He knows that sufferings, and afflictions are the common lot of man, and that uninterrupted happiness cannot be enjoyed on earth. His cup of sorrow is sweetened with the delightful thought that it was prepared for him by one who knew what is best, far better than himself.

It has frequently been asserted that man is the author of his own destiny, now while this is true in a limited sense, yet strictly speaking, it is not correct. For our birth, our places of residence, our occupations, and the other circumstances of life are all under the control of Providence. And no one can assign any other reason why he has been born in this century, why his lot has been cast in this country, or why he has descended from his parents rather than from some others, except that it was the will of his Maker. Hence it is no crime to be born in poor circumstances, nor any disgrace to be engaged in the service of others. The word servant, when properly considered, conveys no idea of reproach, or degradation, and

this station has its advantages, as well as disadvantages, for although they do not enjoy ease and pleasure on so large a scale as those in the higher walks of life, yet they are free from the harrassing cares, and anxieties peculiar to those stations, and perhaps it is not much beyond the mark to affirm that all things considered, their lot is as good as any other.

The great thing then is that each one should feel the responsibilities of his station, and pursue that course which will best promote the interest of those around him, and I know of nothing that will contribute so much to bring about this happy state of things, as religion. For what is religion, but a right state of mind towards God and our fellow men. If all were actuated by the principles of the gospel, and lived under its benign influence, strife, and envy, and malice, and revenge would soon give place to brotherly kindness and good order. Those who are called in the providence of God to rule, would do it with mildness and diligence, and those who serve, would be characterized for their activity and submission, obedience and integrity. They would not only fill up, but adorn their station, and become worthy and useful members of society.

Let those therefore, who are engaged in the service of others, refrain from every thing that tends to create ill-feeling and distrust in those that are over them, and endeavour by their amiable disposition

and good behaviour, to conciliate their favour, and gain their confidence. And let them remember what Solomon says, "A wise servant shall have a rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren."

GOOD AND BAD SERVANTS CONTRASTED.

"THERE are no good servants now," said E. to a friend.

"Indeed there are not," was the reply; "and as for religious servants, they are the worst of all."

While listening to the above conversation, I was somewhat struck with its tenor and boldness, and thought at the time, that it discovered a wrong spirit, and affirmed a very doubtful proposition in rather a dogmatical and unqualified tone.

Since then I have frequently thought of the above conversation, and the oftener I think of it, the more fully am I convinced that those charges made on such sweeping terms have no real foundation, for it cannot be that that class of the com-

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munity are quite so bad as they are represented above.

I tried to persuade myself that my friends to whom I have alluded, must have been very unfortunate in their servants, because my acquaintance with them forbids me for a moment to think that they would intentionally injure any one, or bring a false accusation against the meanest of their fellow creatures.

What surprised me most of all was the charge against religious servants, and I could not get over this, but by supposing that my friend like many others, must have had, not religious servants, but rather servants pretending to be religious, who while they were prating about it, and making great professions, running from house to house, and staying out till late hours at night gossiping, and showing themselves busybodies, have proved by their conduct, that they had none of that religion which says "Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ, not with eye service as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men,

knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine, be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service because they are faithful, and beloved partakers of the benefit.† Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.‡”

It will I think be readily admitted by all, that Paul in the passage just cited, has drawn a perfect portrait of a good servant, and that no person could be dissatisfied with one who would in all cases answer to this high, and appropriate character. And here it may be remarked, that religion is the best, and indeed the only thing that will make good servants. If they were

* Eph. vi. 5, 8.

† 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

‡ Titus ii. 9, 10.

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taught of Christ, and deeply imbued with his spirit, there would be no room nor occasion for instituting such charges against them as those to which we have already alluded.

Since my attention has been drawn to this subject I have carefully examined the scriptures in reference to this subject, and was much struck with the fact that very many passages are directly addressed to servants. And this may be considered one of the peculiar beauties of the Bible, that it enjoins upon all men those very duties which are peculiar to their stations.

It enjoins upon masters, the duties which they owe to those in their service, and it inculcates upon servants by precept and example, uprightness and submission, diligence, and fidelity. And he who walks according to this rule, peace and happiness shall be his lot.

As this class forms a very large and interesting portion of the community, and as the happiness, or misery of families and society, is intimately connected with their good or ill behaviour, it will not be amiss to address them in a simple and familiar way, on the nature of their relation as servants, the responsibilities of their station, and the duties which they owe to their superiors,

and to one another. Every relation of life, and every order of society which is of divine appointment is sacred, and should be so regarded, were it for no other reason, but God had so ordained it. And we ought never to demand any higher reason, or stronger motive for the performance of any duty, than thus saith the Lord.

If we have a declaration of God's will in relation to any subject, or the performance of any duty, we are bound to listen and obey to the best of our abilities. And God will certainly hold us accountable for the manner we discharge our duties, as members of society, especially since he has condescended to give us directions how to act. Now as to the relation and duties of servants, God has spoken in an express, and pointed manner, but alas how few listen to the voice of God, or pay any attention to what he has said to them in his holy Word. And even of those servants, who are professors of religion, we find many that are not real Christians, and by their improper conduct they bring disgrace upon the name of Christ, excite prejudice against his religion, and cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of. But I do not wish to be understood as including all servants in

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this charge, for there is every reason to believe that very many servants by their holy conversation and godliness, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and recommend his religion to those around them. I shall now draw a contrast between good and bad servants, and afterwards give some directions how all may become good. Most of my illustrations will be taken from scripture examples, and I will note down each text as I go along, so that those who wish, may examine the original passages with their connexions for themselves.

I. A good servant is always ready and willing to discharge every lawful and incumbent duty without murmur or complaint. He does not question the propriety of the command, or the practicability of its accomplishment, but taking both these for granted, hastens to obey the orders with alacrity and cheerfulness. Such an one it was the happiness of Abraham to possess in his eldest servant, who ruled over all that he had; and he said unto him:—"Put I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among

whom I dwell, but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.”* After modestly requesting some farther directions how to act in case the damsel should not come, he immediately prepares himself and sets out on his journey, fully determined to execute his master’s orders without delay ; but a bad servant is the reverse of all this. He is slow, and tardy in all his movements, he hesitates at every step, and often enquires, “Is such a command lawful? Could I not avoid it in some way, or delay its performance till some other time?” He is not prompt and cheerful in the discharge of any duty, but always grumbles and complains, when required to do a thing.

II. A good servant feels a deep interest in his master’s business, and is extremely anxious that it may be done well, and come to a successful issue. He not only thinks much about it, and prudently contrives, but also resolves in his own mind, what is most likely to further it, and falls down, at least in spirit, before the throne of grace, and thus pours out his heart in prayer like Elea-

* Gen. xxiv. 2, 4.

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zer, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham."* And when he found that the measures he had prudently and zealously pursued are made to prosper, he returns to the same throne of mercy, with the voice of thanksgiving and praise. "And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord. And he said, blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth, I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren."† Abraham's servant appears to have been a firm believer in the scriptural doctrine of a superintending Providence, connected with the diligent use of suitable means; nor ought these ever to be separated, because the means are ours, but the blessing is from God.—But a bad servant, so far from feeling any concern for the prosperity of his master's affairs, or praying for God's blessing upon them, is totally careless and indifferent; and feels no anxiety as to the issue of his services. He hardly ever thinks of an overruling Providence, or of that

* Gen. xxiv. 12.

† Gen. xxiv. 26, 27.

God, who knows the secrets of the heart. And as to the duty of prayer, it is a strange, and difficult work with him. He neither prays for his master, nor for himself.

III. If we see an individual, willingly and resolutely foregoing his own ease and personal gratification, that he may the more effectually advance the object about which he is employed, should we not be constrained to pronounce him a good servant? This was also a trait in the character of Abraham's servant. After adjusting all the preliminaries with Rebecca and her friends, he might have indulged himself in ease and festivity, without being subjected to censure. But it was far otherwise with this faithful and devoted servant. Sensible that his time belonged to his master, and that to waste it was an indirect species of robbery, he is anxious that not a moment should be lost. "And they rose up in the morning, and he said, send me away unto my master. And her brother, and her mother said, let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten, after that she shall go."* The request seemed reasonable, and some servants would

* Gen. xxiv. 55

have thought it not only excusable to comply with it, but desirable. Having come so long a journey, being so short a time with his master's friends, and so hospitably entertained, it was certainly very reasonable; but mark the man, he is no eye-servant, his heart is in his master's business; he was probably thinking how much he was wanted at home, and still more, how anxious both his old and young master would be about the success of his mission. He therefore foregoes all compliment towards those who so kindly entertained him: and says to Rebecca's friends, with honest abruptness, and simplicity of heart,—“Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way, send me away, that I may go to my master.”* A bad servant, on the contrary, would never think of these things, but studies his own ease and comfort, in all his doings. The least inducement would detain him on his errand, and cause him to forget the anxiety that may be occasioned by his delay; he is wasteful both of his master's time and property.

IV. A good servant steadily pursues that particular service assigned to him, or which natu-

* Gen. xxiv. 56.

rally arises out of his station, manifesting throughout, a strict regard to his master's interest ; not suffering any diminution of his property, by negligence, or want of caution, and if at any time there should occur some doubt as to the property lost, he will bear the damage of it himself, rather than injure, or defraud his master.— Sush a servant was Jacob to Laban. His character and deportment, may be set before servants as a striking example of diligence, care, fidelity, and disinterestedness. “And Jacob answered, and said to Laban, what is my trespass, what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me ? Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff ; set it here before my brethren, and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both. These twenty years have I been with thee ; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flocks have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee. I bare the loss of it ; of my hand didst thou require it, whether it was stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was, in the day the draught consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I

been twenty years in thy house.”* But how different from all this is the conduct and behaviour of a bad servant; he is destitute of that strict regard to property, which was exhibited in the servant of Laban, nor is he so attentive to his duty as Jacob appeared to be. Very many servants not only pilfer small articles, but commit extensive frauds and depredations upon their employers, as if it were no sin to steal from their masters, or cheat them out of their time or property. But it would be well to bear in mind, that both the divine and civil laws are very strict and rigorous on this point. The eighth commandment says: “Thou shalt not steal,” and this precept is as binding upon servants as any other class, for the law of God is universal in its claims, extending over the whole human race, and obligatory on them in every station and condition of life. And human laws are also very strict on this subject, and to show in what light this crime is looked upon by civil courts, I will insert a few lines from the charge of a judge, lately delivered in England, at the trial of a man who had robbed his master of some property.—

* Gen. xxi. 36, 41.

The judge remarked : "I would have servants to know, when they are convicted of abusing the confidence reposed in them, which, in many instances, is unlimited, that it is a rule with his majesty, never, never to extend mercy to them."

V. That must certainly be a good servant, where the master's unbounded confidence is such as is represented in the following passage :—
 "And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man, and he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian ; and his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him, and he made him overseer over his house ; and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house, for Joseph's sake ; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he knew not ought he had, except the bread which he did eat."* In many ser-

* Gen. xxxix. 2, 6.

vants such unbounded confidence would have generated a spirit of pride and arrogance, altogether intolerable, and would have prepared their mind for the seductive influence of the temptation presented by that wicked and faithless female, to whom he made this wise, and forcible remonstrance :—"Behold my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath into my hand, there is none greater in this house than I, neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife ; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God."*

What prudence, what gratitude, what piety, what strict regard for purity and propriety, are combined in the language and deportment of this faithful Hebrew servant ; how worthy the imitation of every male and female servant, in this and other countries ; and what a striking demonstration of the mighty influence of the fear of God, resisting and triumphing over one of the most alluring and powerful temptations that could be presented. And I would advise every servant to read carefully the history of Joseph,

Gen. xxxix. 8, 9.

as given in the Bible, and observe minutely the dealings of Providence towards him, in preserving him from sin, and its awful consequences; and guiding his foot-steps in the paths of virtue and honour, until finally he is elevated to one of the highest stations in that country, and Pharaoh made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. After reading such an account, we cannot help saying that, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and good understanding have all they that do his commandments."* But bad servants have no fear of God before their eyes, nor any serious impressions that he can see, not only their outward actions, but the very thoughts and desires of their hearts. They have no strict regard for purity, nor any tenderness of conscience; they never encourage the reasonings and feelings of Joseph, but rush forward heedless and reckless, under the influence of their passions, till they are overtaken by the vengeance of heaven, and sometimes by the laws of their country, and find it awfully true, that "the wages of sin is death."†

* *Psalm* iii. 10.

† *Rom.* vi. 23.

VI. A good servant is generally possessed of feeling and sympathy. Where this is wanting, it is a distressing addition to the weight of affliction, and accumulation of sorrow already suffered; Job makes a most pointed, and pathetic lamentation on this subject. "They that dwell in my house and my maids count me for a stranger, I am an alien in their sight, I called my servant, and he gave me no answer, I entreated him with my mouth."* But how amiable the feeling, and deep the solicitude of the little maid, that was carried captive from the land of Israel into Syria, who waited on Naaman's wife, seeing the great affliction of her master, and sympathizing with the whole family, she said to her mistress, "Would God, my Lord, were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy."† And this simple and modest expression, led to Naaman's cure; and thus she proved to be an unspeakable blessing to this man, and great comfort to his friends. And she is not the only one that has thus caused joy and gladness to families, and saved them

* Job xix. 15, 1

† 2 Kings v. 3.

from danger and death ; for sympathizing and faithful servants, in many instances, have been very valuable, and of great service to their superiors, by their modest and unaffected counsel and advice.

VII. A good servant always has a strict regard for truth and integrity. He is honest and upright in all his dealings, and none can lead him astray, or cause him to err. He cannot be bribed nor prevailed upon to sell the truth for any price. But a bad servant is not so scrupulous about these things ; he does not esteem truth so high, as to regard it above all price, but he may be, and often is tempted, and prevailed upon by bribes or self-aggrandizement, to work deceit, and tell a falsehood. Such was the case with Ziba, one of the servants that was left of the house of Saul, who was brought before David the king, when he enquired if there were any left of the house of Saul, that he might shew him kindness, for Jonathan's sake :—"And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame of his feet. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth,

and he answered, behold thy servant. And David said unto him, fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness, for Jonathan, thy father's sake, restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father, and thou shalt eat bread at my table, continually.* Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him :—"I have given unto thy master's son, all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house. Thou, therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat; but Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread alway at my table." Then said Ziba unto the king :—"According to all that my Lord, the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do."† But mark the wickedness and deceit of this man. And when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred bunches of raisins, and a hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine. And the king said unto Ziba :—"What meanest thou by

* 11 Samuel ix. 6, 7.

† ib. ix. 9, 11.

these?" And Ziba said:—"The asses be for the king's house-hold to ride on, and the bread and summer fruit, for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink." And the king said:—"And where is thy master's son?" And Ziba said unto the king:—"Behold he abideth at Jerusalem; for he said, to-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father." Then said the king to Ziba:—"Behold thine are all that pertained to Mephibosheth." And Ziba said:—"I humbly beseech thee, that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king."*

And Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed, until the day he came again in peace. And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him:—"Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?" And he answered, my lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the

* 2 Samuel xvi. 1, 4.

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king, because, thy servant is lame. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord, the king, is an angel of God: do, therefore, what is good in thine eyes.* It is very strange, and almost unaccountable, that David suffered Ziba to escape merited punishment, and permitted him to enjoy a part of the fruits of his slander. It may be, he did not, at the time, give full credit to Mephibosheth's statement.—But in the case of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, who told a falsehood to his master, we are informed that he received a just recompense of reward, for his wicked and dishonest conduct.

“But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, said, behold, my master hath spared Naaman, this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. So Gehazi followed after Naaman.—And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, is all well; and he said, all is well.—My master hath sent me, saying, behold even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim,

* 2 Samuel xix. 24, 27.

two young men of the sons of the prophets, give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. And Naaman said, be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants, and they bare them before him. And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house, and he let the men go, and they departed. But he went in, and stood before his master, and Elisha said unto him:—Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, went not my heart with thee; when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive-yards, and vine-yards, and sheep, and oxen, and men servants, and maid servants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman, shall cleave unto thee; and unto thy seed after thee, for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.”*

VIII. A good servant is faithful, and consci-

* 2 Kings v. 20. 27.

encious in the discharge of every duty ; even when he might act otherwise, without being detected, or brought to punishment. He does not require that the eye of his master be constantly watching him ; but feels himself as much bound to perform his duties in his absence, as if he were always present with him. Whatever work he undertakes, or in whatever station he may be placed, he is always active and faithful, were it for no other reason, but simply out of respect to himself.

Who is not struck with the answer of that slave ? which history records ; who, standing among others for sale, and being asked by a purchaser, “wilt thou be faithful, if I buy thee,” replied “yes, whether you buy me, or not !”—But a bad servant is the reverse of all this. He does not feel it his duty to be always faithful and industrious at his work, but whenever an opportunity is offered, he neglects his work, and idles away his time, so that his master is frequently under the painful necessity of adapting harsh and rigorous measures, to make him attend to his work, and perform the duties of his station. Our blessed Saviour, in his simple and beautiful manner of imparting instruction by

parables, takes frequent occasion to refer to the conduct of good and bad servants, for the purpose of illustrating and explaining some important truth. And in one of his parables he thus asks :—"Who then is a faithful, and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?—Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But, and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat, and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that *servant* shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware.—And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* In this parable of good and bad servants, we have a correct delineation of their character, and a contrasted view of their end. The faithful servant must have felt happy, when his master came and found him discharging his respective duties, and when he

* Math. xxiv. 45, 51.

was advanced to a higher station. But the evil servant must have felt miserable, when he was found neglecting his duties ; and degraded in such an awful manner. I would urge it upon every servant to read carefully all the parables of our Saviour, on account of their beauty and simplicity in explaining and enforcing truth ; and especially because they are his words, dropping from his own lips ; and given for your instruction and benefit. If you read them, I am certain you will be constrained to say, "Never man spake like this man."

IX. A good servant is kind, and courteous in all his behaviour, and strongly attached to those that are over him. He considers it not only a duty, but also a privilege, to please them well in all things ; and nothing grieves him so much as their displeasure. There is nothing uncivil nor uncourteous in his speech, frowning, nor repulsive in his aspect, proud, nor haughty in his manners ; but the law of kindness is upon his lips, its smile upon his countenance, and its activity in his life. He is extremely anxious to obtain the favor, and gain the confidence of his superiors, and his countenance is brightened up, when they bestow upon him the least token of

approbation ; though it be but a smile, or a kind look. He becomes strongly attached to them, and renders them service, not merely from necessity, but from principle. This attachment in some instances, is so strong and powerful as to brave danger and death ; and many servants rather than be separated from their masters, have shared with them every kind of hardship and misfortune. At the banishment of the famous Barthelemy from France, it is said that his servant, Le Tellier, came running up just as his master was getting into the carriage, with an order from the Directory, permitting him to accompany his master ; he delivered it to Angereau, who having read it, said you are determined then to share the fate of these men, who are lost for ever ? Whatever events await them, be assured, that they will never return. My mind is made up, answered Le Tellier, I shall be but too happy to share the misfortunes of my master.— Well then, replied Angereau, go fanatic, and perish with him, at the same time adding, soldiers let this man be watched as closely as those miscreants. Le Tellier threw himself on his knees before his master, who was too weak at this awful moment to press so affectionate a

friend to his bosom. This worthy fellow, say the exiles, has constantly shown the same courage and attachment, and we have always treated and considered him as one of our companions.

A gentleman of respectability in England, Dr. L——, was lately confined for some time in the King's Bench prison, while his fortune involved in chancery suit, was unjustly withheld from him. During this distressing period, he was obliged by poverty to tell his negro servant that however repugnant to his feelings, they must part, his pecuniary difficulties being now such, that he was unable to provide himself with the necessaries of life. The negro replied with affectionate warmth: "No massa, we will never part; many a year have you kept me, and now I will keep you."

Accordingly he went out to work as a day labourer, and at the end of every week faithfully brought his earnings to his master, which were sufficient to support them both, until the chancery suit was decided; by which the Doctor obtained an award of thirty thousand pounds; and very much to his honor, he has settled a handsome annuity, for life, on this faithful, and affectionate negro.

A Portuguese slave, who had run away from his master and fled into the woods, but afterwards having heard that his old master was arrested and likely to be condemned for a capital crime, came into the court of justice, assumed the guilt of the fact, suffered himself to be imprisoned, brought false, though judicial proof of his crime, and was executed instead of his beloved master. Though we must condemn this conduct as an unjustifiable sacrifice of truth, and of his own life, yet we cannot but admire the affection, gratitude, greatness, and generosity of mind, here displayed. But how different from all this is the conduct of a bad servant. He is uncourteous and hateful in all his behaviour, and every action of his life betrays a want of kindness and affection; there is something repulsive and disdainful in his very countenance, and there is nothing agreeable nor prepossessing in his appearance. It is of very little consequence to him whether his employers are pleased with him or not, and the only thing that gives him the least trouble is, the punishment consequent upon crime; could he get rid of this, he would not care the snap of his finger about their displeasure. He has no affection nor attachment

for those that are over him, but his heart is full of bitter hatred, and malicious disposition towards them. Were they to be brought to poverty and distress, he would not share their misfortunes, nor would he throw himself into any inconvenience to help them out of trouble.

X. A good servant is obedient, not only to those over him that are kind and humane, but also to the froward and morose, who are often angry without cause, and use improper severity. He behaves well when unjustly punished, and endures the severest sufferings without peevish complaints or purposes of revenge. And notwithstanding all his harsh treatment, he still perseveres in meek endeavours to do his duty. He is guided in all his doings, not by his own feelings, nor the conduct of others, but by the unerring word of God; which says, "servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with

God ; for even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps ; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.”*

How beautifully is this passage illustrated in the following example :—A poor little African boy, only ten years of age, went to hear the preaching of one of the missionaries, and became through his instrumentality, a convert to the Christian religion : his master, (an inveterate enemy to missions,) hearing of it, commanded him never to go again, and declared he would have him whipped to death if he did. The poor little boy, in consequence of this mandate, was very miserable. He could scarcely refrain from going, yet knew his death was inevitable if he did. In this critical situation, he sought direction and assistance at the throne of grace, and after having done this, he felt convinced that it was still his duty to attend, but to be careful that he should never interfere with his master’s busi-

* Peter 2, 18, 23.

ness, and for the rest to leave himself in the hands of God. He therefore went, and on his return, was summoned to his master's presence, and after much violent and abusive language, received five and twenty lashes, and then in a sarcastic tone of blasphemous ridicule, his master exclaimed, "what can Jesus Christ do for you now?" "he enables me to bear it patiently," said the poor child, "give him five and twenty lashes more!" said the inhuman wretch. He was obeyed. "And what can Jesus Christ do for you now?" asked the unfeeling monster. "He helps me to look forward to a future reward," replied the little sufferer. "Give him five and twenty lashes more" vociferated the cruel tyrant in a transport of rage. They complied, and while he listened with savage delight, to the extorted groans of his dying victim, he again demanded, "What can Jesus Christ do for you now?" The youthful martyr, with the last effort of expiring nature, meekly answered, "He enables me to *pray for you, Massa,*" and instantly breathed his last.

Is not *this* a clear proof of the transforming power of the gospel, in enabling a mere youth, converted to Christianity only a short time. be-

fore, thus to exhibit the same mind which was in Christ, when he said on the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." But a bad servant is the reverse of all this ; he does not possess that forgiving spirit which leads a person to pray for his tormentors, and return good for evil when subjected to suffering and ill-treatment ; the passion of revenge is roused in his soul, and he repays evil for evil.

XI. A good servant is kind and affectionate to those that are engaged in like service with himself. He does not render himself hateful by his haughty disposition and harsh behaviour, but is kind and tender hearted in all his deportment. He is patient under provocation—restraining his anger, and keeping his wrath in complete subjection, under the most provoking insults, amidst the basest ingratitude, or the most irritating scorn. In his intercourse with his fellow servants, he is not quick to take offence, by any real or supposed wrong, nor so jealous of his own dignity, as to be roused to anger by any trifling offence, nor transported to wrath by more serious provocations. A spirit of revenge is not cherished in his breast, and when he is injured or offended, he is easily conciliated, most forward to

forgive, and ever ready to return good for evil. This was beautifully illustrated in the following account.

A slave in one of the islands of the West Indies who had originally come from Africa, having been brought under the influence of religious instruction, became singularly valuable to his owner on account of his integrity and general good conduct; after some time his master raised him to a situation of some consequence in the management of his estate, and on one occasion, wanting to purchase twenty additional slaves, employed him to make the selection, giving him instruction to choose those who were strong, and likely to make good workmen. The man went to the slave market and commenced his scrutiny. He had not long surveyed the multitude offered for sale, before he fixed his eye upon one decrepid slave, and told he must be one.—The master appeared to be greatly surprised at his choice, and remonstrated against it. The poor fellow begged that he might be indulged, when the dealer remarked that if they were about to buy twenty, he would give the old man in the bargain. The purchase was accordingly made, and the slaves were conducted to the plan-

tation of their master, but upon none did the selector bestow half the care he did upon the poor decrepid African : he took him to his own habitation, and laid him upon his own bed, he fed him at his own table, and gave him drink out of his own cup ; when he was cold he carried him into the sunshine, and when he was hot he placed him under the shade of cocoa-nut trees. Astonished at the attention this confidential slave bestowed upon a fellow-slave, his master interrogated him upon the subject. He said, you could not take such an interest in the old man, but for some special reason, he is a relation of yours, perhaps your father. "No massa," answered the poor fellow, "he no my fader." He is then an elder brother. "No massa, he no my broder." Then he is an uncle, or some other relation. "No massa, he no be my kindred at all, nor even my friend." Then, asked the master, on what account does he excite your interest ?—"He my enemy, massa ;" replied the slave, "he sold me to the slave dealer, and my Bible tell me when my enemy hunger feed him, and when he thirst give him drink".

But a bad servant is far from being kind to his comrades and companions. He is easily pro-

44 GOOD AND BAD SERVANTS CONTRASTED.

voked, and continually quarrels and disputes with them, and his chief delight is to be engaged in broils and contentions. He is so truly infernal in his disposition, as to sicken and pine at the sight of the success, or happiness of others, and cherishes ill-will on that account, towards them. When he hears another praised and commended, he feels a burning of heart within, and an inclination to detract from their fame, and to lower them in the estimation of those who applaud them. He secretly rejoices to lessen and lower them in public opinion, and strives to render them the objects of dislike. Envy and hatred are the ruling passions of his soul; he not only renders evil for evil, but frequently like his father, the Devil, renders evil for good, and thus brings upon himself the contempt and displeasure of all his companions.

XII. A good servant will discover many of the lesser virtues, and excellent dispositions, which are essential to fit and qualify him for his station. He will pursue his course of service in a quiet and steady manner, in opposition to that noisy and turbulent conduct, which is so offensive to his employers. He acts as in the sight of God, and needs not the presence of the supe-

rior to prompt him to duty. He is patient and submissive, even under unkind language and cruel treatment. He will shun the beer-house, the grog-shop, the gambling-table, and the play-house, knowing that these engross the time which is not his own, and involve him in expenses which he cannot bear without resorting to pilfering and fraud.

He is a keeper at home, and is not guilty of making mischief between families, by carrying tales from one house to another, so that we cannot apply to him that odious epithet, tale-bearer. He is prone and anxious to conceal the failings of others, and knows full well that many things of a private nature frequently occur in families, which ought never to be mentioned out of doors ; and therefore he refrains from telling any thing that has a tendency to injure the character or reputation of his employers. But a bad servant is extremely troublesome on all these points.—He is frequently found lounging about the beer-house and grog-shop, spending his money and getting drunk ; and sometimes, in order to get whiskey, he resorts to pilfering and fraud, until he is detected and brought to shame and ruin. There is more of this wicked practice carried on

than people are generally aware, and it is worse in some parts of the country than others. It so happens that there are some wicked men, or rather evil spirits in human shape, who hold out inducements and encourage servants to defraud their masters of property, and bring it to them in exchange for whiskey or some other drinks. Now any man that would do this, ought to be held up to public odium, and banished from society, and the servant who resorts to such wicked practice, ought to be apprehended and severely dealt with, as a warning and example to others.

A bad servant has also a wonderful faculty for telling tales. If any thing unpleasant has occurred in the family to which he belongs, he appears to be greatly troubled, until all the neighbors have been informed of it ; and his chief delight is to circulate false and slanderous reports. He is very noisy and contentious among his fellow servants, so much so as to occasion great annoyance and trouble to his employers. A very unpleasant occurrence took place not long since, at a certain family in the city of W——. When the lady of the house was entertaining a company in the parlour one morning, they were great-

ly annoyed with a terrible noise from the kitchen. The lady rang the bell to enquire the cause of it, but no answer. The bell was rang again, but there was no answer. She had to go down herself to see what was the matter, but soon returned much frightened and deeply mortified, and was under the painful necessity of informing them that her two servant maids were fighting in the kitchen, and that she could not part them. It seems they got at it in earnest, and fought with knife in hand, and scratching most wofully, as women sometimes do, when they get at such work. I hope such scenes are of rare occurrence, especially among female servants.

XIII. A good servant is extremely anxious to serve his time and fulfil all his engagements.—He does not consider it a matter of little consequence whether or not he violates a pledge, or breaks an engagement which he has made with his employers, but looks upon it in the light of a solemn duty, and feels himself bound to fulfil whatever he has promised. He will not, if he can possibly avoid it, withdraw from service or run away from his master, before his time has expired, whether it be for a limited period of years, or for life.

But a bad servant is not very conscientious about these things. He can violate a pledge, or break an engagement without much trouble or regret, and if it suits his purpose, he can run away from his master, and thus cheat him out of his time and property. We have an instance of this in the case of Onesimus, the servant of Philemon, who ran away from his master, and for that, or some other crime, was imprisoned at Rome, where he became acquainted with the apostle Paul, and was converted through his instrumentality. After Onesimus's conversion, Paul did not detain him in his service, nor persuade him to stay away from his master, but sent him back to Philemon, as every other man ought to do under the same circumstances. For conversion to Christianity does not change the civil relations of men, nor release them from former engagements; but it rather strengthens their obligations as citizens, and members of society. The Bible enjoins upon them, whatever be their station, obedience and fidelity; submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake. "Servants be subject to your masters, with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."*

* 1 Peter 2, 13, 18.

XIV. A good servant is very useful and serviceable to his employer and all others connected with him. He fulfils his own character, and discharges his several duties to the entire satisfaction of all concerned. He is extremely careful not to give offence by acting unsuitable to his rank or station, and his mild and conciliating manners secure to him the good will and confidence of his superiors. And by his honest and faithful conduct, he removes every prejudice from their mind, and stops the mouth of slanderers. The servants of lord —, were greatly impressed, and evidently reformed under the preaching of the gospel at —. His lordship being one day on the promenade, was jeered by some of the company, upon the revolution which had taken place among his servants, by a change of their religion. The noble lord replied, “as to the change of their religion, or what their religious sentiments are, I cannot tell, but one thing I know, that since they have changed their religion, they have been much better servants, and shall meet with no opposition from me.”— How delightful and happy is it when our good conduct puts to silence the ignorance of foolish speakers.

Some years ago, says an eminent writer, I became acquainted with a servant, whom I shall call Lucius, one who knowing the human heart in its deceitfulness and deep depravity, stood before his God like the publican, smiting upon his breast, but before his master he stood with an integrity and diligence which his master had long observed, and which at length gained his entire confidence. His master thought, and talked of Christianity, like many more, who have it yet to learn, but he was constrained to admire its effects in his servant Lucius. He saw in him evident marks of the fear of God, the consolations of the gospel, the truth it enjoins, and the devotion it inspires. But while he beheld all this as a singular matter of fact, maintained and exercised in a house like his, he was equally struck in observing that Lucius was one of the most humble and attentive of his domestics, and no less eminent as a servant than a saint. The unbelieving master continued while he lived, to advance and vindicate the Christian servant, and dying, bequeathed a solid testimony to his virtues.

To Lucius the servants also looked as to a common friend or brother. He instructed them,

he assisted them, he reconciled them, he was their example, and if there were any more foolish or profligate than the rest, he had the honor of their reproach.

I need not add, that I mention this fact as well as the former, to show how honorable a part such servants sustain in society; to show that true religion is the same in every age, to exhibit the fruits of genuine Christianity whenever it is found, and to encourage servants to higher aims than they generally entertain. All good servants act thus, and are highly respected by all around them.

But a bad servant acts quite the contrary. He is rude and impertinent in his manners, and his whole behaviour is indecorous and unbecoming the rank and station which he holds in society. He indulges himself in haughty airs, and exhibits a proud and arrogant spirit. There is nothing agreeable nor conciliating in his deportment, and by his improper conduct, he excites the prejudice and ill-will of his superiors. He lowers and degrades himself in the estimation of all good people, and instead of commanding the respect, he is always hated by his fellow-servants.



Prince

Alex



sufficient care of herself." "I have observed said I, her attention at church, as well as when waiting upon you." "My servant," continued she, "is a Christian, and in my late distress, afforded me her prayers as well as her tears. Her parents were too poor to give her any education, but she has taught herself to read, and frequently reads the scriptures to me. Now and then while she is reading, her heart is too full to be quite silent on the passage, and then she drops an expression or two, accompanied with such simplicity and meaning, as to bring to my mind those words of our Saviour: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes." In short, I esteem her one of the most valuable gifts I ever received from an indulgent Providence, and never could have supposed that so much of comfort depended on the faithfulness and care of a poor servant." How much better do these retired virtues deserve recording, than those splendid virtues, which historians call up all their eloquence to perpetuate and adorn.

But who could say this of a bad servant. What is there in him worthy of being noticed or per-

petuated. All his actions and conduct bespeak a want of sympathy and affection, and his heart is utterly destitute of every kind and tender feeling. When he sees others in distress, he has no desire of affording them relief, and if requested to supply their wants or administer to their necessities, he turns away with scorn, and exhibits the utmost indifference and neglect; and if at any time he is called to wait upon the sick and afflicted, instead of giving them aid and comfort by his kind and incessant care, he is the source of continual grief and trouble to them, on account of his want of attention and remissness in duty.

XVI. A good servant feels a deep interest in the spiritual as well as temporal welfare of others. He aims at this in all that he does, and makes it the great object of his life to benefit others. He has frequently proved himself to be of great service to his superiors, and of unspeakable blessing to his fellow-servants. And were we possessed of sufficient information and all the facts in the case, we might record innumerable instances of servants being the happy means of converting many souls to God, and putting to silence the ignorance of foolish speakers. And thus they become co-workers with God in the great and mighty

work of converting the world. This is the greatest honour that can possibly be conferred on man, and we are expressly told in the Scriptures, that they that turn many unto righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever. Now can it be possible that poor and obscure servants are permitted to engage in this glorious work? yes, for many are able to trace their first religious impressions and conversion under God, to the instrumentality of servants. A servant maid resided some years since, in a certain family in the north of Ireland; the family were dissenters, but dissenter in many parts of Ireland is but another name for an Arian or Socinian. The poor girl was much ridiculed for her religion by the young ladies, yet she did not render evil for evil, but on the contrary, she would allow them to laugh at her, and then mildly reason with them; she made it her study to be attentive and useful to them, took opportunities to speak to them about religion, and would offer to read the sacred scriptures to them when they went to bed. They commonly fell asleep and that in a very little time under the sound, but she was not discouraged. Having exemplified Christianity in her life, Providence sent a fever to remove her to a better state. The young ladies

were not permitted to see her during her illness, but they heard of her behaviour, which did not lessen the impression that her previous conduct had made upon them. Soon after this, two of the young ladies made a public profession of true religion; the little leaven spread, and now the whole family appear truly pious. Nor is religion in this highly favored family confined to them alone, but their influence is also felt in other families around. And it is worthy of notice, that they chiefly ascribe their first religious impressions, and conversion under God, to the life and death of the servant maid.

We see from this, how much good a person may do, even in the humblest stations of life. Who can tell, or conceive the amount of influence for good this servant girl has exerted, and will yet exert, for while, as to her body, she is silent in the grave, her influence will go on increasing and expanding till the day of judgment. How interesting and delightful will be the interview between those young ladies and her, when they shall meet in heaven, and where they shall relate, and trace their first religious impressions and conversion under God, to her good influence and Christian conduct. Then they shall rejoice together in the

love of God throughout eternity, and praise him for his redeeming grace. But how different from all this is the conduct and behaviour of a bad servant. He exerts no good influence on his companions, but on the contrary, leads them down the path of vice to shame and ruin. His example is very injurious to those that are younger than himself, and not only, he is wicked himself, but takes delight also in making others wicked, which is the deepest stain which can be attached to a person's character. He hardly ever proves himself to be of any real benefit to his master, or to his fellow-servants; and frequently by his wicked conduct, he brings disgrace upon himself, and those connected with him. How often has it happened that by his want of care, and dishonesty, he has created ill-feeling and suspicion against others, who were honest and upright in all their dealings. Instead of reforming and benefitting those around him, he is the means of hardening their hearts and leading them on to sin. And how awful will be the interview, in the eternal world between him and those whom he thus ruined and destroyed.

I might run out the contrast much farther, and mention many other particulars, which constitute the distinction between good and bad servants.—

But sufficient have been given to demonstrate that among this class as well as every other, there are some good and some bad. And by reading the illustrations drawn from scripture and other examples, every candid mind must be convinced that there have been and still are, many servants of excellent and unimpeachable character.

I hope every servant who may read the foregoing remarks, will pause awhile before proceeding any farther, and enquire which of those descriptions answer his case, for each one must belong to either of them ; if you are not good, you must be bad, because there is no neutral place here to occupy.

Perhaps some, after making proper reflections, will be compelled to class themselves among the bad servants, if that should be the case, I confess it is rather mournful and degrading. Yet still, if you really believe that to be the fact, you have made a great discovery, because no one will ever make any attempt to reform, until he is first convinced that his former conduct has been wrong and improper.

Some may exclaim that they have not heretofore properly discharged their respective duties, and they express great sorrow for it, and wish to

become better, if they only knew how. It will be my object in what follows to give some directions how all may become good ; and my first direction is,

SEEK RELIGION.

I mention this first, because it is the most important, and indeed the only thing that can make you truly useful. It teaches you to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. It will prepare you for the discharge of every duty, and fit you for every relation of life, for no motives are so powerful in influencing us to do good as those of religion.

But you may ask, what is religion ? and how are we to seek it ? Religion, as it has been already stated, is a right state of mind towards God and our fellow men. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets, and may be considered as the sum and substance of religion. We should endeavor to cultivate high

regard and veneration for the names, and attributes of God. We must be deeply and constantly impressed with a sense of our obligations to him, as our Creator, Preserver, and daily Benefactor, and especially as our Redeemer in Christ Jesus. We should always bear in mind, that he is the former of our bodies, and the Father of our souls, that he has made us, and not we ourselves, and that in giving us existence, he had some wise and worthy end in view. It cannot be that he has sent us into this world to live to ourselves, or merely to seek the gratifications of the present life. He had higher and nobler ends in view when he gave us being. He made us for himself, and formed us for his own glory. And we should in all things show forth his praise, and glorify him in our bodies and our spirits which are his, because the chief end of our being is to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever.

Are you sensible of this? Do you really feel your obligations to God, as the author of your being, and that as your Creator, he has a right of authority over you, to demand your service, your time, and your all.

He is not only our Creator, but also our Preserver; and this increases our obligation to love

and serve him. We are indebted to God not only for our original, but our continued existence, for in him we live and move, and have our being, and from him we receive life and breath, and all things. Do you think of this sometimes; and are you sensible of your own weakness and dependence upon God; for without him you can do nothing. And were he to withdraw from underneath you his almighty arm, you would immediately sink into your original nothingness.—Every day, and every moment of your life, lays you under new obligations to be more obedient and grateful to God, as the great author and supporter of your being. He is not only our Creator and Preserver, but also our daily Benefactor. We are the creatures of his bounty, and the subjects of his care. How good and kind he has been to us. Every successive breath we draw is a new and repeated evidence of his goodness. How manifold are the mercies we receive, and how various are the sources of our enjoyments. How greatly do the different organs of our senses contribute to our happiness? What an amount of pleasure and delight we derive from surrounding objects, through the organ of sight? How pleasant and agreeable are the singing of

birds, and other melodious sounds communicated to us through the organ of hearing? How sweet and delicious are the luxuries of life enjoyed by us through the organ of taste? And how delightful and refreshing are the odours of flowers and other things, which we partake through the organ of smell? Now these organs instead of contributing to our happiness, might have been so formed as to communicate incessant pain and misery, and still preserve our life. Do you ever think of this? And are you truly thankful to the bountiful Giver of every good and perfect gift? Do you seriously feel your obligations to Him for his loving kindness, and tender mercies? Or do you live on the bounties of Heaven, and constantly partake of the good things of this life, without ever thinking of the Hand which bestows them all? If you do, you have no religion; for the very essence of religion consists in exercising pious and grateful feelings towards God, for the blessings he so abundantly showers down upon us. Let me ask, what are the feelings of your heart towards your earthly parents, when you think of their kind and constant care over you in helpless infancy and younger years? Can you forget their toils, and

cares, and watchings over you ? Are you able to break asunder those tender ties which bind you still so closely to them ? Or do you not, on the contrary, feel that neither time nor distance can weaken those strong cords of affection which unite your soul in love to them ? And while you are now perhaps far away from your dear friends, and entirely among strangers, your mind frequently runs back to those former times, when under the parental roof, you received so many tokens of care and affection. But if your earthly parents deserve all this from you, and if a recollection of their kindness is so deeply impressed upon your mind that nothing can blot it out, how much more does your heavenly Father deserve your tenderest love and gratitude ? He who is the best and kindest of all friends ; and he who has watched over you with unremitting care ever since you had a being. What would you think of him who forgets and disregards his earthly parents ? Would you not charge him with base ingratitude ? But how much more ungrateful is he who forgets and disregards his heavenly Father ?

There is another, and still more interesting view in which we ought to think of God, and

that is, as our Redeemer, in Christ Jesus. If the other considerations of our heavenly Father ought to excite feelings of gratitude, and awaken us to a deep sense of our obligations to him, how much more should this move our hearts in love? Only think of the prize he gave for our redemption; His only begotten, and well-beloved Son. "For God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What greater gift could he bestow than this, for when he gave his Son he gave all. And should you not give your heart to him, and spend your life in his service? This indeed would be but a small return for so great a gift. Think also of the sacrifices which Christ made for us: consider the glory from which he descended, the shame and ignominy to which he stooped, the variety, the severity, and the continuance of his sufferings, and the place, and the mode of his dying; then you shall be able to feel the justice of the apostle Paul's remarks, that he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Does not this deserve your gratitude, and lead you to make an unreserved consecration of yourself to God.

Our heavenly Father not only gave his Son to die for us, but has sent his Spirit to apply the blessings which Christ purchased, to the souls of those that are saved. This Blessed Spirit, by his sweet constraining influences, operates upon the hearts of those who believe. Have you ever experienced his strivings in your heart? Do you feel no anxiety about your spiritual welfare? Are you not sometimes impressed with the importance and necessity of securing the salvation of your soul? Have you no desire of making your peace with God, and become a Christian? If you have, cherish and indulge those feelings, and under their influence go to the throne of grace and cry for mercy to your soul; for be assured that those feelings and desires are not the native production of your own heart, neither were they infused there by the adversary of your soul, but they are the operations of the Spirit of God upon your heart. And you know what the scripture saith:—"Quench not the Spirit. To-day if ye will hear his voice harden not your heart." Those who frequently and seriously meditate upon God, under the respective characters that have been stated, and exercise pious

and grateful feelings towards him, as their Creator, Preserver, Benefactor and gracious Redeemer, will naturally and necessarily exercise proper feelings towards their fellow men.

Religion is a real and inestimable acquisition. It is not a fiction, it is not bigotry, superstition, or a cunningly devised fable. It is not the mark of a mean, but of a great mind. It is wisdom in the understanding, rectitude in the will, and purity in the affections. The man that is truly religious, is born again; he is brought out of darkness into marvellous light; the principle of holiness is implanted in his soul, and like the returning prodigal, he comes home to his Father. How great a change! What an unspeakable blessing? It is worthy of God to give and ought to be the highest objects of our desires to receive. Without this it is impossible to enter into the kingdom of God, or experience the exercises and consolations of his people. Religion is profitable in this life, as well as in that which is to come; it prompts to a faithful and conscientious discharge of every duty, and in a moral view, it renders a person greatly superior to what he was before his conversion. Religion forms a better

parent or child, a better ruler or subject, a better master or servant, than without it can possibly be formed.

It suppresses the baser passions, suggests the noblest views, and animates the soul to be rich in good works. No principles ever known among men, are so efficacious in promoting holiness, and none actually abounds in good works except those who feel the constraining influences of religion in their hearts. Let the scoffers at Christianity, and the enemies of revelation, therefore beware how they think and speak of religion, since it is so essential, even to the well-being of society. For we are fully authorised to state from revelation and universal experience, that in proportion as the influences of religion are felt in the community, so will the state of society become better or worse. And let those who wish to be useful in their day and generation, and happy beyond the grave, seek religion, for nothing else can make them truly good.

There is a very wrong idea of religion prevalent in the world. Many look upon it as something gloomy and melancholy, and if they become religious, they must renounce every pleasure, and give themselves up to grief. Now

this is altogether a wrong impression, and a great slander on religion, for there is nothing in it that has the least tendency to cause grief and sorrow to the mind. It is true that Christians are frequently cast down, and walk mournful under the oppression of the enemy. But the occasion of it is not religion, but rather the want of religion.

When the child of God lives under the pure influence of religion, and partakes of its pleasures, he has joy unspeakable and full of glory, and he is often made to rejoice greatly in the Lord amidst the trials and troubles of life; when he is harrassed with cares, and distressed with fears, its soothing balm affords consolation to his mind; when he is despised by the world, forgotten by friends, and ill treated by those that are over him, he has a sure support to sustain him under all his discouragements. When every earthly source of enjoyment is shut up against him, and when flesh and heart faileth, God is the strength of his heart, and his portion forever. What more does he want. If you desire comfort in all your troubles, and help in every time of need, seek religion, for its pleasures and enjoyments are unspeakably

more extensive and pure, and lasting, than those of the world.

I ought to state, however, that if you become religious, you must renounce every sinful pleasure, and withdraw from your wicked companions. But in giving them up, there is a delightful satisfaction, because you are only denying yourself of those very things that are the cause of all your grief and sorrow. Religion will teach you to return good for evil, to bless those that curse you, and to pray for your enemies.

But you may ask farther. How are we to seek religion, and improve ourselves in the knowledge and practice of it? You must seek it by the diligent use of those means which God has appointed, such as reading the Bible, prayer, self-examination, and a faithful attendance upon the public ordinances of the sanctuary.—The Bible is a book intended for our use, and expressly given for that purpose. You should therefore peruse its precious contents, study its holy precepts, make it the man of your counsel, and the delight of your soul. You should also regard it as the revealed will of God to man, as the highest and only rule whence we are to learn

our duty. If you carefully read the Psalms of David, you cannot but be impressed with one fact, namely, the frequent mention he makes of the word of God. In the hundred and nineteenth psalm, which is the longest, there is not, I think, a single verse without some allusion to the word or law of God. He only had the five books of Moses and a few others, yet how highly did he value them; he esteemed them more precious than gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb, and regarded them as a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path. But how much more should we value them, since we have not only the five books of Moses, but the complete word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

In order to read the Bible with profit, you must constantly bear in mind that it is the word of God. If the Lord should send you a message direct from heaven, would you not receive it with great solemnity, or if Christ should write a letter with his own hand, would you not read it again and again, and believe every word of it? Now the Bible is a message sent from God; it is a letter addressed to you from Christ; you

should therefore read it with great care and reverence, and every time you open it, you should say to yourself, this is God's book, I will hear what God the Lord will speak. Whenever you read the Bible, you should look to God for the help and light of his spirit. The scriptures contain many things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest unto their own destruction: not that they are unintelligible in themselves, but because sin has darkened our understanding, and perverted our judgment, so that we cannot apprehend their proper meaning. Every time, therefore, you open the Bible, you should say with David:—"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Exercise faith in all that you read, because there is no part of scripture which can be properly read without faith; and this faith must be such as shall produce in you those very feelings intended by God, in revealing the truth: for example, when you read a command, faith will lead you to obey, when you read a threatening, to tremble, when you read a promise, to embrace it, especially when any thing is written concerning Christ, faith will lead us to accept of him,

and rest upon him alone for salvation. Whenever you read any portion of God's word, ask yourself, do I really believe these things. And often say with the apostle of old, Lord increase our faith.

Make it a constant practice of reading some portion of scripture daily, though it be but few verses, for it is much better to read a verse or two every day than many chapters at once, but at long and irregular intervals. The word of God is the nourishment of the soul, just as food is of the body, and we should be as unwilling to omit our daily portion of it as we would be to miss one of our ordinary meals.

Commit to memory some portion of scripture every day, this is an excellent practice, and there is much advantage derived from it; for if you have committed much of the Bible to memory, it will afford you subjects for meditation, when you cannot have your book before you, and it will aid and comfort you when at work or sick, or during the waking hours of the night.

Attend frequently and punctually to the duties of self-examination and prayer. Be careful to retire often from the world, and seek some soli-

tary chamber for secret prayer, and there commune with your own heart ; attend to the arduous work of self-examination, and pour out the desires and aspirations of your heart, when none but God is present; and what a delightful privilege, thus to retire a while from the world, and hold sweet and intimate communion with our Father and our God. Whenever you approach the throne of grace, endeavor to have the combined feelings of fear and confidence. Pray in faith, nothing doubting: ask in the name of Christ, for he is the only acceptable plea that we can have. Be earnest in your supplications, and let your heart be engaged in the work when you pray. For what is prayer but the offering up of our desires, the pouring out of the heart, or the ascension of the soul unto God? Persevere in prayer, pray always, be instant in prayer, pray with all prayer and supplication ; pray without ceasing. But you may ask how can I pray without ceasing, and attend to my other duties. You are not the first one that has been puzzled with the solution of this difficulty. Many wise and great men have not been able to give a satisfactory explanation of this passage. Sometime since a number of ministers were assembled

for the discussion of difficult questions, and among others, it was asked how the command to pray without ceasing could be complied with?—Various suppositions were started, and at length one of the number was appointed to write upon it, and read at the next meeting. Which being overheard by a plain sensible servant girl, she exclaimed:—"What a whole month wanted to tell the meaning of that text? It is one of the easiest and best texts in the Bible. Well, well, said an old minister, Mary, what can you say about it! Let us know how you understand it, can you pray all the time? O yes, sir. What, when you have so many things to do? Why sir, the more I have to do, the more I can pray. Indeed; well Mary do let us know how it is, for most people think otherwise. Well sir, said the girl, when I first open my eyes in the morning, I pray, Lord open the eyes of my understanding, and when I am dressing, I pray that I may be clothed with the robe of righteousness, and when I have washed me, I ask for the washing of regeneration, and as I begin work, I pray that I may have strength equal to my day, when I begin to kindle up the fire, I pray that God's work may revive in my soul, and as I sweep out the

house, I pray that my heart may be cleansed of all its impurities, and while preparing and partaking of breakfast, I desire to be fed with the hidden manna, and the sincere milk of the word, and as I am busy with the little children, I look up to God as my Father, and pray for the spirit of adoption, that I may be his child,—and so on all day, every thing I do furnishes me with a thought for prayer.” Enough, enough, cried the old divine, these things are revealed to babes, and often hid from the wise and the prudent.—Go on Mary, said he, pray without ceasing, and as for us, my brethren, let us bless the Lord for this exposition, and remember that he has said, the meek will he guide in judgment. I hope this explanation will be satisfactory to your mind, and that you will, like Mary, pray without ceasing.

Be careful to attend not only to secret prayer, but also to family worship, whenever it is observed. Some servants absent themselves when the rest of the family are engaged in this delightful work. If you wish to enjoy the favor of God, and peace of mind, be always present when permitted; and invited to unite in offering up sacrifices of praise and adoration around the family altar.

Whenever you have an opportunity, attend upon the means of grace. Go somewhere to church if you can, every Sabbath, and when there, remember that it is the house of God.— These things you must faithfully and conscientiously perform if you wish to become religious and grow in grace.

And now I would affectionately request you to consider this subject seriously and prayerfully. And ask yourself as in the presence of God, whether you have religion in the heart or not; whether you have experienced the grace of God in the soul, and whether you have his fear always before your eyes, to keep you from evil; what is the governing motive that influences you in all your actions? Is it a desire to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever? Have you at all times a realizing sense that the eye of God is upon you? In your transactions with your fellow men, have you an eye constantly on the judgment seat of Christ, before whom you must soon appear, to render up a strict account of every thing done in the body, whether it be good or evil? And may the Lord assist you to act well your part in life, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God, so that when you are done with

earth, and earthly things, you may hear that welcome plaudit addressed to you by the great Master:—"Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

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